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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1395

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLL

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1137

RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0941

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3575

RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 3473

RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 2101

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000196

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

AIDAC

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS, DS/IP/EAP, DS/DSS, INR/EAP and INL

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AID

USAID FOR ANE/EAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC SOCI ID

SUBJECT: ACEH PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE ESCALATES

¶11. (SBU) Summary. Two shootings in as many days have killed two members of the Aceh Transition Committee (KPA - the successor organization to the GAM separatist movement) and injured a third on the night of February 3 and the afternoon of February 4. The shootings follow in the wake of an attempted grenade attack on the Mayor of Sabang on February 1, an attack on the Aceh Party (PA) office in North Aceh on January 26, and other incidents including a grenade attack on the Golkar Party office in Bireun on January 22. Taken together the incidents are creating serious concern among political parties and political observers in Aceh. End Summary.

KPA Members Shot in Multiple Attacks

¶12. (SBU) On the night of February 3 the Party Secretary of the KPA in Bireuen District, a popular ex-GAM leader known as Abu Karim, was shot and killed at close range while in his car. Commentators in Aceh suspect that the killing could have been the result of a business dispute. Wira Atmadinata, who heads the Political Party Communication Forum in Aceh told Consulate Medan on February 5 that he believes the KPA and Aceh Party in Bireun are at loggerheads over profits from local construction contracts and that this was what lead to the killing. Police are investigating the case and attempting to determine motives and suspects in the case. Governor Irwandi Yusuf attended Karim's funeral.

¶13. (SBU) During midday February 4 two KPA members riding in their car in Greater Aceh District were shot at by two assailants riding a motorbike. One was killed and the other critically wounded in the attack. Media sources claim that the two ex-GAM members were involved in the planning and program of the October, 2008 return of Hasan di Tiro to Aceh. The attacks created frustration and anger among KPA leaders. Ibrahim KBS, KPA Spokesperson, told media on February 4, "If the police are no longer able to handle the situation in Aceh, then all parties that support the peace must ask and demand the International world to immediately take real action in Aceh in order to save the peace."

Grenade Placed under ex-GAM Mayor's Car

¶14. (SBU) On February 1 a grenade wrapped in a plastic bag was found under the wheel of the car of Munawar Liza, the ex-GAM Mayor of Sabang City on the island of Weh just north of Banda Aceh. In the weeks prior to the attempted attack there had been a series of protests in Sabang, directed at the Mayor, complaining of the lack of development in the city. The grenade failed to detonate and

police believe it was of Korean origin. Mayor Liza described the grenade to Consulate Medan as a crude time bomb. The pin had been removed and a rubber band was affixed around the grenade. A corrosive oily substance had been dripped on the grenade and was slowly eating away at the elastic. Both the Mayor and Vice Mayor accuse the Indonesian military of ginning up the demonstrations. Police are investigating the case but no motive or suspects have been identified.

Attacks on Political Party Offices

15. (SBU) Overt attacks on political party offices in Aceh continue and at 3:15AM on February 4 the Aceh Party Office in Langsa City was attacked by unknown assailants observed in a car and on a motorbike who detonated a grenade at the PA Office and fled. Police in Langsa told the media on February 5 that they had invited a forensic team from Medan to come to Langsa and analyze the crime scene. At 3:15AM on January 26 the office of the Aceh Party in North Aceh was attacked by a group of assailants driving a car who opened fire on the office. A watchmen at the scene told media that a rifle was used to fire four shots at the office and that the vehicle headed towards East Aceh as it sped off. Police recovered a spent rifle round and are investigating the case. The shooting was a departure from the usual modus operandi from previous weeks of detonating a grenade late at night or early in the morning at a party office while the office is unoccupied. A grenade was also detonated at the Golkar Party office in Bireun at 4:45AM on January 22. Police are still interviewing witnesses and gathering information in that case.

KPA and Party Aceh Frustration

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16. (SBU) Party Aceh Spokesperson Adnan Beuransyah told Consulate Medan on February 5 that he believed the attack on PA offices and the recent killings served to frighten PA members and were intended to erode support for PA. He added that PA regretted the incidents as a black mark on the peace process and added that PA guarantees its respect for the 2005 Helsinki MoU and the territorial integrity of Indonesia. He added that both he and KPA leaders are convinced that the Indonesian military are behind the incidents. Adnan added that the military is still unwilling to accept its neutral role and gave an example of a local PA meeting he claimed was broken up by the military in Pidie district on the evening of February 4.

17. (SBU) The recent spate of attacks and attempted attacks raise concerns regarding the overall trend of violence in Aceh prior to the April, 2009 legislative elections. The recent increases in armed attacks are of particular concern. The shooting attack on the PA office in North Aceh on January 26 also represents a departure from recent practice.

HUME